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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0976
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 001265

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/10/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: REPUBLIKA SRPSKA LASHES OUT AT
INTERNATIONALS, OTHERS

Classified By: DCM Jonathan Moore for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (SBU) The Republika Srpska (RS) Government adopted a report on November 9 which alleged that Principal Deputy High Representative (PDHR) Gregorian and eight other officials, journalists and political analysts have been collaborating to harm the interests of the RS. Among the other officials mentioned in the report are Chief State Prosecutor Milorad Barasin, former head of the Criminal Investigation Division at the State Investigation and Protection Agency (IPA) Dragan Lukac as well as some local journalists and political analysts who have been critical of RS Prime Minister Dodik. The report builds on materials that the RS government submitted to the State Prosecutor last year seeking criminal charges against the people mentioned in the report. We have been told that the criminal report had been dismissed by the State Prosecutor's office for lack of evidence to substantiate the charges. End Summary.

TI and the Prosecutors

¶2. (C) The report adopted by the RS Government and put on their website is a rambling collection of charges, mostly citing quotations pulled from newspaper articles or public websites. The report builds on materials that the RS government submitted to the State Prosecutor last year. We have been told by officials at the State Prosecutor's Office that the criminal report had been dismissed for lack of evidence. The thrust of the report is that PDHR Raffi Gregorian has close connections with the various people mentioned in the report, and that together they have been engaged in a campaign to defame the RS Government and RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik. Although former Bosnia Transparency International (TI) Director Boris Divjak is not officially named as one of the conspirators, much of the report is comprised of quotations of his in the newspapers and in the TI website which allegedly furnish evidence that TI was involved in a defamation campaign orchestrated by Gregorian.

¶3. (SBU) Many pages of the report are devoted to quoting charges made by TI about malfeasance by the RS government in privatizing an oil refinery in Bosanski Brod and other energy-related infrastructure. The report says that charges made by TI that the RS was working with corrupt partners are unfounded, and asks why TI appeared to be working so closely with State prosecutors. The RS report argues that TI Director Divjak said publicly in 2007 that criminal charges were being prepared against the RS Government and Dodik, and notes that this was not public information at the time. The report asks how Divjak could have known this, and asks

suggestively whether he learned it from Prosecutors or from "someone higher," by which the report clearly appears to be referring to PDHR Gregorian.

¶4. (SBU) The report also alleges direct connections between PDHR Gregorian and the Prosecutor's office. For example, it mentions that Gregorian received a letter from Dragomir Babic, the head of the NGO "Narodni Front" about efforts by the RS government to undermine TI. Then it notes that Gregorian met with Chief State Prosecutor Barasin at OHR about this issue and mentioned this in a press released issued by OHR after the meeting. This is cited by the report as alleged evidence that Gregorian is attempting to influence the Prosecutors Office.

Alleged Attempts to Manipulate the Media

¶5. (SBU) The report also alleges that Gregorian and OHR have tried to manipulate the media. It cites an interview with Bakir Hadzimerovic, editor of the television program "60 Minutes," that reportedly appeared in the newspaper Slobodna Bosna. According to the RS report, Hadzimerovic claimed in this interview that Gregorian and the Anti-corruption unit at OHR had fed him information about the involvement of various Bosniaks in terrorist activities, including involvement in the attack on the World Trade Center. Hadzimerovic then used some of this information in a program appearing in his "60 Minutes" program. According to the RS report, Hadzimerovic expressed frustration in his Slobodna Bosna interview that OHR later denied the veracity of the information that had been used in the television program.

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¶6. (SBU) The RS report also cites an editorial appearing in the Banja Luka newspaper "Nezavisne Novine" alleging that Gregorian tried to put pressure on the newspaper. The editorial notes that Gregorian met with journalists and analysts in Banja Luka who claimed that they had been "blacklisted," and could not have their material published in such RS media outlets as Nezavisne Novine. The newspaper then named some of the people who met with Gregorian and explained why their work was not published in the newspaper. One, they said, refused to work for the fees the newspaper would offer. Another, they said, was in the employ of a political party. Nezavisne Novine claimed that this meeting with the "blacklisted" journalists and analysts was an attempt by Gregorian to pressure the newspaper into publishing criticism of RS PM Dodik.

Comment

¶7. (C) This report is the continuation of efforts by RS PM Dodik and the RS government to discredit OHR, carefully timed to take place in the run-up to the next meeting of the Peace Implementation Council on November 18-19. Much of the RS report simply represents quotes from publicly available sources combined with claims that these quotes prove a "conspiracy." Activities mentioned in the report such as a meeting of PDHR Gregorian with dissident journalists hardly qualify as conspiratorial activity. Most likely the RS Government decided to adopt the report and publicize it in order to piggyback on recent criticisms of Gregorian made by Islamic Community leaders such as Reis Cerić and Dnevni Avaz owner Fahrudin Radoncic--a regular Dodik interlocutor--who claimed that Gregorian and his staff were targeting Muslim leaders for corruption investigations. Presumably, Dodik and other RS officials believed this was an opportune time to advance their own agenda of closing OHR and eliminating the threat of investigation posed by a strong State Prosecutor's office assisted by international staff.

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